

Students Put Habitat Over the Top

By JANE LANE

Duxbury students proved that big goals can be accomplished with little steps.

With some help from last week's fundraising walkathon by the students of the Alden School, DMS and the high school, the first Duxbury home built under the auspices of Habitat for Humanity is about a month away from construction. And, according to Ken Meyers, chairman of the Duxbury Alliance of Habitat for Humanity, it was the money raised by the students last week that clinched their fundraising efforts.

"It's great that the kids were the ones to get us there," Meyers said at the conclusion of the walkathon.

"We've been working for a long time. We needed \$70,000 and with the money you raised today, you have finished our fundraising. Now," Meyers said to applause from his young audience, "we can start to build this home."

The students who participated through the DMS/Alden Reach Out program raised about \$3,000 for the housing project. Reach Out encourages

students to get involved in service to the community at a young age. Last year, money raised by the Reach Out walkathon went toward the construction of a new animal shelter.

Despite inclement weather which postponed last week's walkathon for a day, nearly 100 students took to the streets accompanied by a group of parents and faculty members, including Chris Trombly, the new DMS assistant principal. Twenty Teen Leaders from the high school also participated,

raising about \$800 toward the effort. Marybeth Zeller, one of the DHS Teen Leaders, said she and the others "always wanted to get involved in Habitat. Community service is important," she added. "and it's really cool to see the little kids involved like this."

All 93 students walked the circular route from Alden to the wooded Habitat site on Tremont Street, back to St. George Street and the Alden School.

Once they returned to Alden, the students were rewarded with cookies and soda while they listened to what more meaningful rewards would come from their hard work.

Eileen Dillon from the Duxbury Habitat Alliance that the money raised through their event would be used toward the construction of a home in Duxbury for a local family who otherwise could not afford to live in town. She explained that the voters at last March's town meeting approved the donation of land to Habitat for Humanity for the site of the new home.

Since then, Dillon said, the organization has been busy raising the money to construct the one-story Cape-style home. The next step will be to select a local family who will live in the house. They, along with as

many volunteers as Habitat can recruit, will be responsible for the actual construction. To the surprise of many of the students, especially the participants from DMS, anyone over the age of 14 can volunteer to help with the construction. In addition, the family must agree to donate at least 500 hours of labor on their future home.

Now that the property title is in hand, the land will soon be cleared for a foundation. A family will be selected and then construction should begin in about a month. Because Habitat depends on the generosity and the sweat equity of a corps of volunteers, construction is limited to Saturdays. It takes an average of 45 Saturdays to complete a home, so Meyers figured the Duxbury site should be finished in about a year. The process could move more quickly, he hinted, if volunteers with construction experience get involved.

Following the walkathon, Dillon met with the students and described the Habitat home, which will include three bedrooms, a kitchen, a livingroom, dining room and one bathroom. Her description was met immediately with an enthusiastic response from one young student: "That's better than nothing."

Dillon's immediate response: "It's a lot better than nothing."

Duxbury Clipper

Wednesday, October 4, 2000